FOREST ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OF THE

NORTHERN CIRCLE, BOMBAY PRESIDENCY,

FOR THE FOREST YEAR 1896-97.

INTRODUCTION.

The forest area during the year has been increased by 4,231 acres, due to forest settlement operations.

2. Forest settlement has been practically completed in the Circle during the year. At the date of this report the whole of Thána, save the Sháhápur Táluka, has been settled, and the report for that táluka is before Government. In Surat some modification of the demarcation having been found necessary it was undertaken, but under pressure of plague work, the report remains to be dealt with.

3. No change was made in the Protective Establishment during the year, but the Thána District was formed into three divisions instead of two from 1st January.

4. Demarcation of forest boundaries has been pushed on as well as the exceptional conditions of the year have admitted.

5. Forest survey work has been carried on as usual.

6. Working Plans for the Máhim, Vádá and Bassein Ranges of the Thána Divisions were sanctioned during the year. The proposals for the Working Plans of the Kálol Mahál and the Tulsi Forest belonging to the Bombay Municipality are before Government. The Working Plans of the Kályán and Sálsette Range of the Thána District and the Hálol Mahál of the Panch Mahálş are under preparations.

7. The number of cases in which forest offences were prosecuted in criminal courts was 235 against 259 of the previous year, thus showing a slight falling off; but the percentage of failures was high as compared with last year's record, *viz.*, 19·3 to 32·3.

8. Some advance in fire protection may fairly be claimed, as in Surat and the Panch Mahálş the results of protective measures have been reported as much more satisfactory than in previous years. In the Thána District the area burnt over is reported as considerably less than usual; but as a set-off to this it should be remembered that grass was in great demand, and villagers consequently were able to see that their interests were concerned in the prevention of forest fires.

9. The financial results of the year have been eminently unsatisfactory, as the falling off in receipts amounted to some two lacs. The disastrous effects of famine and plague showed themselves only too clearly in the timber trade as in nearly every other form of trade.

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